A GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE

DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This guidance document will support local professional development committees in the process of summarizing the school plan and in developing a systemic district professional development plan designed to impact the learning of all students. The local committee together with the district office play an integral role in coordinating and facilitating the work of the school professional development committees in their district. In addition, the local committee will continue to develop a district-wide plan that supports school professional development and ensures district professional development goals are met. It will be vital that district and school professional development committees are in engaged in ongoing communication of planning and summarizing needs and goals. The local committee will want to reach out to staff within the schools as well district level staff such as those involved in curriculum, assessment, mentoring, and professional development for assistance and support during the planning process. A key role for the district committee is to examine school plans for gaps in needed professsional development or to provide opportunities for learning across schools.

In conjunction with the District Professional Development Plan Template, the guidance document is designed to lead the Local Professional Development Committee through the development process of a District Professional Development Plan. The district plan questions will help the Local Professional Development Committee think systematically about the key elements needed to create a quality District Professional Development Plan that supports the School Professional Development plans in the district and the professional learning needs of all staff members.

As the local professional development committee begins its work, it will want to become familiar with the school level plans, their professional development goals and how they align to school and district priorities, the depth of professional development activities at the school level and how the school plans to monitor the outcomes.

GETTING STARTED

As the district committee develops the plan, it will want to refer to the resource *Collaborative Professional Learning in School and Beyond: A Tool Kit for New Jersey*, referred to in this document as the Tool Kit. The Tool Kit, developed through a partnership of the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board with the National Staff Development Council, is intended to support a new vision of collaborative professional learning in schools and districts. The Tool Kit is being provided to each district as a hard copy and is available online through a password protected site on the Department of Education (DOE) website. You may get access to the site by e-mailing a request for the DOE website to teachpd@doe.state.nj.us.

The Tool Kit provides helpful information on planning and implementing collaborative professional development. Tools from the tool kit are referenced in this guidance that can assist the Local Professional Development Committee in planning and summarizing professional development. These "tools" include team planning templates; informative articles on professional development; resources for central office personnel; protocols for planning and documenting professional learning team meetings; surveys on professional learning; resources to support the effective use of data, the analysis of student work, and the creation of formative assessments; information on the evaluation of professional developmen.

In each area of this guidance document, there is a subsection entitled Tool Kit Support which suggests tools from the tool kit that can enrich the work of your district committee.

SECTION 1 | District Profile

The district profile provides a portrait of the district and will incorporate school level information for the overall district professional development plan. In Section 1 of the template:

- Fill in the required information on the District Professional Development Plan School Profile sheet on the template.

- Make sure the overall district plan has a title page that names both the district and the year the plan will be implemented.

SECTION 2 | Building a District Professional Development Plan:

A. Reflection

In this section, local committees and other staff involved in developing the plan are asked to reflect on previous professional development in the district and answer questions about the leverage points that could be used to strengthen professional development across the district and the challenges anticipated this year in implementing professional development. It will also be very important to see the direct link between professional development for teachers and results that the school wants for its students. Please answer the following questions in section 2A of the District Professional Development Plan Template:

1. What were the positive aspects of previous professional development opportunities in your district that you want to retain and replicate? What challenges emerged that require attention?
2. Through previous evaluations of your professional development program have you been able to document how professional development is improving teacher practices and student learning? If yes, describe how you have accomplished this task.
3. How have you ensured that professional learning is addressing student learning needs and is aligned to the district and school priorities and key initiatives and programs?

B.   Needs Assessment:

Effective professional development improves the learning of all students. Therefore, the needs assessment for district professional development should be focused on identified district priorities for student learning as identified in the school and district learning goals and other district/school student data, and the learning needs of educators in supporting student learning.

In Section B of the District Professional Development Template, the local committee is asked to identify the needs-assessment strategies used to identify needed professional learning. The content of professional development is informed by analyzing student data inclusive of achievement data, demographic data, perception data, and school processes data. In preparation for analyzing a school's needs assessment choices the committee is asked to have a discussion with all stakeholders on the definition of student success measures.

1. Each school has developed an initial definition of student achievement. What commonalities do you notice in the definitions? What student learning priorities are highlighted in the definitions? How will the LPDC support these definitions as they develop the local plan?
2. How did the district committee communicate student learning priorities to the schools for school planning? How has the district committee sought input for district priorities for professional development? Summarize the formal or informal needs assessments that were conducted to identify adult learning priorities focused on student learning gaps?
3. Identify key data for the district plan that were used to provide evidence of adult learning needs based on student needs.
4. What did the final analysis of the needs assessments show to be district priorities?

C. Professional Development Goals for the District:

When developing the goals for a district's professional development, ensure that these goals derive from established student learning goal(s), the schools' definitions of student achievement, the overall district priorities and academic initiatives, and reflect needs of staff based on student and teacher needs analysis processes. In Section C of the District Professional Development Template the local committee is asked to:

1. List the district's established student learning goals and other learning needs. These should: be based on an overview of the schools' goals; an analysis of the needs assessment data; be directly tied to enhanced student learning; and be measurable and attainable.
2. List the professional development goals for the district. These could be SMART goals.
   a. Specific: Be specific about what is to be accomplished
   b. Measurable: Identify how the goal will be measured
   c. Attainable: Ensure the capacity exists to accomplish the goal
   d. Results Based: Identify the benchmarks and outcomes for the goal
   e. Time-bound: Set a specific timeframe for completing the goal
3. Provide an explanation of how the district professional development goals align with the district priorities goals and the systemic goals of the district.

D. District Professional Development Opportunities

The New Jersey Professional Development Standards provide direction for the process of professional development. This includes:

- the use of student, school and district data to identify professional learning priorities, the research to support innovation in classroom instruction and embed new learning in classroom practices, the adult learning strategies and protocols that are used to support the outcomes of the learning, and the collaborative structures that develop collective responsibility for student learning.

The Professional Development Standards also provide guidance on the content of professional development focused on equity, teacher quality, and parent involvement.

Professional development should

- reflect the Professional Development Standards related to content, process and context and the Professional Standards for Teachers;
- support the continuing development of professional learning communities;
- be ongoing and job-embedded (e.g. peer coaching, mentoring, classroom walk-through, teacher collaboration);
- focus on standards-based instruction; and
- make on-going reflection on school/student data a part of professional learning, so that Local and School Professional Development Committee members can determine progress toward meeting the school goals.

In Section D of the District Professional Development Template:

1. Describe the professional development structures and processes that will be used in the district. For instance, will professional development opportunities be offered for team based learning, online learning, workshops or other venues? Will partnerships be developed with universities, county colleges, and other educational organizations to support adult learning in the schools? Will district offerings provide sustained support for implementation of new skills? How will consultants, institutes, and conferences support district professional development goals? In this section describe the varieties of contexts in which professional development will be offered rather than a listing of trainings or a catalog of events.
2. What are some of the key core curriculum content standard areas on which your district will focus the professional development? What other district initiatives will be targeted for intensive learning?
3. How will the district support groups of schools whose professional development goals are closely aligned? How will the district support the diversity of school professional development goals?
4. How will the district address professional learning gaps not addressed in schools?
5. How are teachers and administrators being supported in developing productive team structures and protocols that focus on results for students?
6. How will the district plan be communicated to all stakeholders?
7. Summarize the connection between student learning goals and the professional development opportunities.

E. Professional Development Resources

New Jersey Professional Development Standards stress the importance of context in relation to effective professional development. This includes the importance of building learning communities, leadership that advocates for effective professional development and providing sufficient resources for the work. Resources such as time, staff support, outside expertise, access to data, technology and supportive leadership are essential in realizing professional development goals and are an important element of planning. Leadership at all levels advocates for relevant and targeted professional development that improves student learning. This section of the plan is where a local committee lists resources needed to support district professional development.

In Section E of the District Professional Development Plan Template, the committee is asked to:

1. Include a description of time allocation and supporting resources needed to meet the professional development goals. You can indicate the kinds of time opportunities you are creating in the district. For instance, are you offering learning opportunities in which teachers are encouraged to network within and across schools? What district policies are in place to provide time for collaborative professional learning? Are staff meetings and district-wide convocations and institutes focused on student learning? How has the district identified expertise internal and external that will support professional learning priorities?

2. Identify the resources and structures in place in the district that demonstrate that the district community values and nurtures quality professional development for adult learners. These might include dedicated professional learning days, summer academies, coaching and mentoring or after school learning opportunities. Identify the resources that will support educators in improving practices, such as research, professional periodicals, consultants, and conferences linked to the needs of district and school staff.

3. How does leadership engage all stakeholders in making the change needed to support collaborative professional learning?

TOOL KIT SUPPORT: These tools may assist with identifying resources needed for professional development.

Tool 6.1	Protocol for developing agreements
Tool 6.2	Building effective teams
Tool 6.3	Transform your group into a team
Tool 6.4	Which stage is your team in? A survey
Tool 6.5	Team agreement template
Tool 6.6	Becoming a productive team
Tool 7.2	Analysis of current time usage with time use log
Tool 7.5	Making time for adult learning
Tool 7.6	Comparison of strategies for making time for collaborative professional learning
Tool 7.7	Forming a recommendation

These tools may help with identifying ways the Local Professional Development Committee can support and assist the school in achieving its professional development goals:

Tool 10.1	Sample team plan
Tool 10.2	Team planning template
Tool 10.3	Alternative team planning template
Tool 10.4	Team agenda template
Tool 10.5	Team summary report template

TOOL KIT SUPPORT: These tools may assist with finding ways for the school and district administration to support the professional development endeavors of the staff:

Tool 2.2	New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders
Tool 11.1	Essays by Dennis Sparks
Tool 11.2	Benefits of collaborative professional learning
Tool 11.3	Key learnings for collaborative professional learning teams
Tool 11.4	Principals' strategies for increasing staff capacities for continuous learning
Tool 11.5	In the right context
Tool 11.6	Culture shift doesn't occur overnight – or without conflict
Tool 11.7	How to launch a community
Tool 11.8	Getting everyone to buy in
Tool 12.1	Backmapping model
Tool 12.2	If not a workshop, then what?
Tool 12.3	Break the inservice habit

F. Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of the Professional Development Plan

An effective evaluation process provides important information about the implementation of your District Professional Development Plan that can help to assure that professional development is focused on school and district improvement. It provides the opportunity for the Local Professional Development Committee to reflect on the district's professional development goals and to determine if the goals were met and if the professional development had on impact on student learning. Evaluation needs to be a systematic, purposeful process of studying, reviewing, and analyzing data gathered from different sources.

Tool 13.1 Eight Smooth Steps by Joellen Killion of the National Staff Development Council is a helpful resource. It contains a summary of the key steps for evaluating professional development. These steps provide a systematic way to think about how to evaluate the success of the District Professional Development Plan. Professional development should consider: (1) teacher response to the professional development; (2) the impact of professional development on teacher practice; and (3) the impact on student learning.

After reviewing the eight steps, please summarize answers to the following questions in Section F of the District Professional Development Plan Template:

1. What knowledge, skills or behaviors will educators learn as a result of the District Professional Development Plan and what evidence will you have to indicate staff has learned new skills?
2. What student data will be used to determine how these knowledge, skills or behaviors impact student learning?
3. What additional data is needed to support the program evaluation process?
4. How will the District Professional Development Plan encourage job-embedded collaboration and what is the evidence to support this?
5. What data are needed to answer the evaluation questions? For instance, the Local Professional Development Committee might consider the following questions:

   - How might you consider holding district-wide focus groups or conduct surveys to get feedback on district professional development offerings?
   - How might you use school level program evaluation data to provide more input on the district professional development plan?
   - How might you examine and tabulate individual evaluation forms from specific events or team meetings to determine usefulness of professional learning offered in the past that you might repeat for other staff?

G. Summaries of School Professional Development Plans

Each school must submit a one to two page narrative summary of their professional development plan to the LPDC. The LPDC will attach the school summaries as part of the district professional development plan. The school has been asked to provide the following information to the local committee:

1. <u>Reflection:</u> Identify key elements of previous professional development you will leverage in the new plan.
2. <u>Needs Assessment:</u> Submit the school definition of student achievement. Identify key findings from needs assessments.
3. <u>Professional Development Goals:</u> Identify the professional development goals connected to the student learning goals for the school/district.
4. <u>Professional Development Opportunities:</u> Identify the processes and structures the school will use to provide professional learning opportunities.
5. <u>Professional Development Resources:</u> Identify the resources that will ensure professional learning is ongoing.
6. <u>Evaluation:</u> Identify your goals for evaluation of your professional development in the first year.

LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CHECKLIST

Check to be certain that all sections of the plan are included.

	Included ✓
Title Page (include district names)	
Section 1: School Profile	
• District Profile Sheet	
• District Committee Sheet	
Section 2: Local Professional Development Plan	
A: Reflection on Previous PD Opportunities	
• Summary of positive aspects and connections to student learning of previous professional development opportunities	
• Identification of challenges	
B: Needs Assessment	
• Identification of assessments used to develop the focus of the School Professional Development Plan	
• List of professional development needs	
C: Professional Development Goals	
• List of student learning goals and professional development goals	
D: Professional Development Opportunities	
• List of sustained professional development opportunities	
• Evidence of support for the development of collaborative learning	
• Connection to Professional Development Standards (content, context and process)	
E: Professional Development Resources	
• Identification of professional development resources	
F: Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of the Professional Development Plan	
• List of evaluation procedures and tools used to assess the School Professional Development Plan	
• Analysis of the impact of the School Professional Development Plan on student learning	
G: Summaries of School Professional Development Plans	